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Book Review: Theory of Identities

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Laruelle, François. **Theory of identities**, tr. by Alyosha Edlebi. Columbia, 2016. 270p index afp ISBN 9780231168946, \$35.00; ISBN 9780231541459 ebook, \$34.99.

In this book (first published in French in 1992), Laruelle suggests a radical new form of thinking based on restoring rigorous science to philosophy. Such a science of philosophy ("non-philosophy") would dismiss imaginative unrealities and make philosophy "real" again by reclaiming the rigor of true science. A science grounded in fractal theory, quantum mechanics, unified field theory, chaos theory, and so on would rid philosophy of impotence. Thus, philosophy's future would lie in global cooperation with science. But would Laruelle's so-called scientific method be as rigorous as most scientists require? Does familiarity with scientific concepts and parlaying them to explode existing philosophy constitute "a science of philosophy"? As historians of philosophy point out, in the 18th century science was not divorced from philosophy: Newton—who was a scientist, philosopher, and religious mystic—received a degree in natural philosophy. Since science broke from philosophy in the last 300 years, one sees that Laruelle's project is not so new. Leo Strauss serves as a guide in demarcating the history of political philosophy and the consequences of the schism of science from philosophy that left the humanities in crisis. Laruelle's critique is insightful, but his solution of "non-philosophy" allied with rigorous scientific methods is perhaps throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

--D. B. Levy, *Touro College, Lander College for Women*

Summing Up: Optional. Upper-division undergraduates through faculty.